

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 02071 261354Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7765
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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UNCLAS CARACAS 2071

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR VE

SUBJECT: COMMENTS BY PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON HEADS
OF STATE MEETING IN PANAMA

1. PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER JUAN ANTONIO TACK VISITED CARACAS ON FEBRUARY 24-25 AND MET WITH PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE CARACAS DAILY EL NACIONAL, TACK DISCUSSED PREPARATIONS FOR A PROSPECTIVE MEETING IN PANAMA OF THE PRESIDENTS OF VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, AND PANAMA.

2. TACK STATED THAT PANAMANIAN CHIEF OF STATE TORRIJOS HAD CONVENED THE MEETING PURSUANT TO DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE DURING THE DECEMBER 1974 MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENT WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ IN CIUDAD GUAYANA. TACK HOPED THAT THOSE INVITED TO THE PANAMA MEETING WOULD REITERATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR PANAMANIAN ASPIRATIONS FOR A NEW CANAL TREATY WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE THE CONCEPTS OF A SEPARATE CANAL ZONE AND OF THE PERPETUITY OF THE PRESENT TREATY. HE SAID THAT PANAMA DID NOT WISH TO BE AN ENEMY OF THE U.S., BUT NEITHER DID IT WISH TO BE "ONE OF THE STARS IN THE AMERICAN FLAG."

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PAGE 02 CARACA 02071 261354Z

3. DESCRIBING HIS FEBRUARY 24 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ AS "POSITIVE AND CORDIAL", TACK TOLD THE PRESS THAT PEREZ CONFIRMED HIS INTENTION TO ATTEND THE GATHERING IN PANAMA AND PLANNED TO ARRIVE THERE IN THE EVENING OF MARCH 22 FOLLOWING HIS TRIP TO MEXICO. ACCORDING TO TACK, THE PRESIDENTS' MEETING WOULD LAST 2-3 DAYS AND WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE SALA CAPITULAR (SIC) DE SAN FRANCISCO, THE SITE OF THE PANAMA CONGRESS OF 1826. TACK SAID THAT PETROLEUM WOULD NOT BE A FUNDAMENTAL THEME OF THE AGENDA.

4. ASKED FOR PANAMA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS VENEZUELA'S INITIATIVE IN FAVOR OF SELA, TACK EXPRESSED HIS TOTAL AGREEMENT WITH THIS IDEA, WHICH HE THOUGHT HAD COME AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT, AND SAID THAT PANAMA WOULD BE MOST WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS INITIATIVE. HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO CREATE A HEMISPHERIC ORGAN DESIGNED TO REPLACE THE OAS. HE THEN ENUMERATED THE ARTICLES IN THE OAS CHARTER WHICH HE ALLEGED THAT THE U.S. HAD FREQUENTLY VIOLATED.
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